

October 1, 2009

Dear LEA Leaders:

I am writing today to emphasize the importance of test security and to briefly outline test security measures that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) will be putting in place for the 2010 administration of the DC CAS. In addition to enhancing security for the 2010 administration, these measures will also help OSSE evaluate the test integrity of the 2009 DC CAS administration.

The District takes test security very seriously, and I am confident that you share in the goal of ensuring that all tests are administered in a fair and secure manner. Strong test security includes procedures and policies for before, during, and after testing and incorporates monitoring protocols to ensure all proper procedures are followed. OSSE will provide guidance to LEAs on testing security and perform various post-test integrity checks to ensure that breaches of the integrity of the assessment are identified and investigated. While I know that the vast majority of staff follows the testing protocols, OSSE will investigate all allegations of impropriety and, if evidence confirms those allegations, we will impose appropriate sanctions.

As you may know, an erasure analysis was conducted of all 2008 DC CAS results. Those analyses proved inconclusive. I don't believe it would be a productive use of time and resources to continue looking into the 2008 DC CAS administration. We have learned from this experience and intend to improve the process for ensuring test security and integrity.

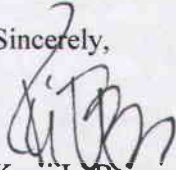
There are various analyses states perform to ensure test integrity that I believe could be useful for the District beginning with the 2009 DC CAS results. Examples of the types of analyses OSSE will conduct include trend analyses, looking at unusual gains in achievement; erasure analyses, looking at student answer changes; and item analyses, looking at how particular items or item types perform in classrooms and schools. If an anomaly is discovered, OSSE will carefully review all available data and, if it determines that an investigation is warranted, will contact you to share the information and to lay out the parameters for an investigation. Depending upon the severity of the alleged violation, OSSE will either ask the LEA to investigate the matter and report back to OSSE, or OSSE may appoint an independent investigator. In the event that OSSE asks an independent investigator to conduct a review, the LEA will be kept apprised of the concerns, the scope of the review, and periodic progress on the investigation. Following the conclusion of the investigation, OSSE will review the final report and make a determination about the appropriate course of action.

The best way to ensure the integrity of the test is to prevent the opportunity for violations; therefore, OSSE will be working with you to improve training for Test Chairpersons and to ensure that principals and test administrators are fully aware of and trained on test security protocols. I will soon be sharing a draft of the revised *DC Test Security Guidelines* for your review – these capture our review of best

practices from other states and provide guidelines and policies to assist LEAs in crafting a comprehensive and secure testing environment. OSSE also will build on the test monitoring that occurred during the 2009 administration. These new guidelines and protocols will be in place for the spring 2010 DC CAS administration. More specific details about these steps will be forthcoming over the next few weeks and months.

In the meantime, I look forward to working with you to continue the tremendous progress we have made over the past two years. I believe that these checks and measures will go a long way in ensuring that the DC CAS remains a valid and reliable indicator of the progress our students are making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. Briggs', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.
DC State Superintendent of Education

cc: Mayor Adrian Fenty
Vincent Gray, Chairman, DC Council
Victor Reinoso, Deputy Mayor for Education
Lisa Raymond, President, State Board of Education